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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION SERVICE
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June 4, 1947

For your information

TO STATE FARM LABOR SUPERVISORS of Fla., Ga., S.C., N.C., Va., Md., Del., Pa.,
N.J., N.Y., Conn., Tenn., and Ohio

Subject: Atlantic Coast Migratory Movement

SHEFFIELD REPORTS FROM FLORIDA

C. A. Sheffield, Extension Field Agent for the southern States, who has been on temporary assignment for the Farm Labor Program, has just return from Florida where he spent several weeks at the Belle Glade Farm Labor Office. While in Florida much of Sheffield's time was spent in developing relationships and plans which have resulted in simplified procedure for getting prompt placement of Florida migrants with employers, both in Florida and in other East Coast States.

All county agents in Florida counties, from which workers normally migrate, now have prepared lists of crew leaders and workers who are ready to move north. This information is available at the Belle Glade office and within a few hours after a request is received at Belle Glade for one or more crews, it has been possible to have the crews on the way north. As an example of how the system works, Sheffield cites a request received on Monday morning, May 26 from Bill Hillman in Pocomoke City, Md. for from 175 to 200 workers to start picking strawberries on Wednesday. All crews were to be less than 40 in number. As soon as the call was received, Belle Glade called V. J. Major, Assistant County Agent at Palatka and asked him to supply four or five crews, Bartow and West Palm Beach were each asked for one crew. The remainder were found at Belle Glade. Some of the crews left for Pocomoke City on Monday afternoon, and the rest on Tuesday morning. The entire number requested were on the way to Maryland within 24 hours after the service was requested.

Sheffield suggests that county agents and farm labor assistants, in States which will need more workers later, send their job offers to the Belle Glade office at once, even though the workers will be needed at a much later date. If this is done, the crew leader can be put in immediate contact with the prospective employer. The date for reporting will be set well in advance and much uncertainty and aimless travel eliminated. Key to success of this operation is in having the Florida county lists of crews prepared early. The Florida county agents and Sheffield have done a good job on that end.

Sheffield also reports that at least one Florida Sugar Company has changed from an hourly wage offer to a piece work offer for chopping sugar cane. Result was that more workers applied than could be supplied with hoes. One more step in convincing employers that Negro migrants will do more work per day and stay longer on the job when paid on a piece work basis. In connection with this cooperation with sugar companies, every effort has been made to utilize local domestic labor first.

DELAWARE has enough workers now for present needs. About June 27, two or three small crews, totaling about 30 workers can be used at the Bridgeville Camp to pick early apples. From July 1 to July 10 about 150 additional workers will be needed in the Bridgeville and Staytonville areas in Sussex County to pick beans. Crew leaders wanting this work in apples and beans should call or write to William H. Henderson, County Agricultural Agent, Georgetown, Delaware. The telephone number is Georgetown 21. The Woodside Camp in Kent County will be used to house migrant workers this year and will be opened in time to accommodate any workers needed for early apples in the Woodside-Dover area.

MARYLAND has an adequate supply of farm labor for present needs. There are plenty of migrants available to finish the strawberry harvest. Bean harvest will start about June 20. Some work has been provided for migrants now on hand for the period between strawberries and beans. Housing has been available for all migrants needed to date, but not for as many as have wanted to come to Maryland. Bill Hillman at the Pocomoke City Camp has been flooded with telegrams and telephone requests from Florida workers who want to come to Maryland now. As of May 30, there were 804 migrants in Maryland. The season on all crops is about two weeks late. Tomato acreage is about the same as last year, but all planted to come off about the same date. Some drop in acreage planted for fresh market.

VIRGINIA conditions have not changed materially from a week ago. Dry weather still prevails in the Eastern Shore counties. This coupled with high winds will reduce snap bean yields somewhat. Bean picking will start about June 10. Strawberries are about over and there will be at least a two to three week gap before bean work reaches a peak. During this time, it will be difficult to provide work for migrants now in the area. "Red" Williams says "we don't need any more workers until beans are ready." For the first time in history, the tomato acreage is greater than the potato acreage. Growers and farm labor officials foresee a problem of supplying enough workers to pick tomatoes, if the season is favorable for good yields.

FLORIDA reports that workers can be cleared from any county in Florida. Workers are restless and want to move. Many are leaving with no jobs in prospect. Send labor requests to Merle Stout at the Belle Glade Farm Labor Office. As of May 27, reports show that 3,136 workers have passed through the Gross Florida Information Station.

NORTH CAROLINA farm labor officials, after months of planning and conjecture, are this week watching a dream come true. During the winter months, North Carolina employers of migrant labor and farm labor officials had been getting reliable crews in Florida to sign work agreements in advance of the usual dates for coming to North Carolina. Housing in public operated camps was reserved for crews with work agreements. Workers were urged, on the basis of this security, to remain in Florida until they were notified that work was available in North Carolina. Up to last week, very few workers had come to North Carolina. Those that found work were placed in growers' housing. Potatoes were to be ready for harvest this week and growers sent for their crews last week. During this seven-day period, approximately 2,500 workers have arrived in North Carolina. Practically all of them had work agreements and were promptly housed.

At Columbia, slightly over 300 workers arrived and started picking potatoes. Others will arrive about June 15. At Aurora, 800 are in the area with 300 working on June 3. All but one group were expected. Peak of digging potatoes will come the week of June 9. There are approximately 1,000 workers in the Grandy area, mostly employed on beans now, with potato picking fairly heavy next week. A few more arrived here than were expected. Housing was supplied, if and when they got work

agreements. Ten crews of about 35 workers each had no evidence of work agreements, and had made no previous effort to obtain contracts. These were sent on to other States. Belcross has 400 workers in growers' housing. The labor supply center will not open until June 6. Weeksville has a few workers in growers' quarters and the camp will not open until June 6. Reports were not available from Bayboro, Morehead City, and Mount Olive, but workers are arriving. N. B. Boddie is in charge of the Wilmington Information Station where the telephone is Wilmington 20269.

SUMMER STORAGE OF MIGRANTS' HOUSEHOLD GOODS IN FLORIDA CAMPS

Many migrants have requested permission to leave household goods in housing in Florida camps operated by the Labor Branch while they are working in northern States during the summer. The Solicitor's Office has ruled that furniture can be left in these camps under a month to month renewable lease agreement. Details of procedure will be outlined by H. W. Rainey, Chief of Operations, Southeastern Division, Labor Branch, PMA, 449 West Peachtree Street, N. W., Atlanta, Georgia. He will see that migrants are informed of this arrangement to leave household good in Florida camps.

SHALL WE PUSH OR LEAD?

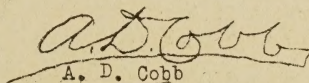
As we dig deeper into the postwar farm labor job, the opportunity to tie in more of the fundamental principles of time tried Extension practice becomes apparent. Reaching an agreement for the actual hiring, housing, and payment of farm work is a normal function for which employer and worker are jointly responsible. But directly tied in with this operation are the needs for more and better housing, the securing and dissemination of information which will reduce unnecessary waste of time in travel, uncertainty of employment conditions, and employer-worker misunderstandings. Job simplification in itself is a distinct challenge to Extension teaching.

It is seldom easy to change ideas based on long years of habit and custom. It takes time and proof, and leadership and understanding. It also takes nerve. The North Carolina experiment reported above is an illustration of what can be accomplished when the nerve to start something new was combined with a full understanding of the problems involved and the gain to be achieved.

We are reminded of a quotation from "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran - "The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."

That is our idea of Extension teaching which has leadership as its basis. Our farm labor program should not attempt to push people into new practices but rather to lead them into the desire to do things for themselves.

Very truly yours,



A. D. Cobb
Northeastern Area Director
Recruitment and Placement Division
Extension Farm Labor Program

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